



Testimony to the Appropriations Committee

February 13, 2014

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

My name is Cheryl Burack and I am the Executive Director at Family Centered Services of CT (formerly Coordinating Council For Children In Crisis, Inc.). I would like to express appreciation for, and support of, the Governor's budget – a strong budget for children. I strongly support SB 25, An Act Establishing the Office of Early Childhood. SB 25 will codify into law an Office of Early Childhood to coordinate and implement new and existing early childhood programs and services, including early home visitation programs. As a provider of the Nurturing Families Network, I look forward to working with the Office to develop and implement a coordinated service system.

Coordinating services is overdue and consolidation into one Office will avoid problems presented by multiple funding streams, missions, and governance. It will prevent fragmentation and duplication of services, help to identify and fill service gaps and provide more comprehensive information needed to make informed policy decisions. It will help to ensure that each family is directed to the program that will best meet their needs. It will promote a common set of outcomes, and tracking the results across programs can give us a stronger and much clearer picture about how we are doing in CT to meet the needs of infants, toddlers and their families.

I would also like to express support for a proposed 3% increase in Care4Kids rates for licensed centers and family child care providers and a 3% increase in School Readiness and State-Funded Center rates, understanding that in order for the State Funded Centers to get the intended 3% increase and maintain rate parity with School Readiness, roughly \$500,000 must be added to the Child Care Services line item (The 3% increase was erroneously calculated on only the state half of the total allocation to the State Funded Centers, the other half coming from a federal block grant that does not appear in the state budget).

Thank you for your continued support of programs and policies that promote the health, safety and wellbeing of young children and their families.

Submitted by:

Cheryl Burack, M.S.
Executive Director
Family Centered Services of CT, Inc.
235 Nicoll Street (Rear)
New Haven, CT 06511